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CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN
Seventh meeting
New York, 7 February 1994
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Election, in accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention of 12 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to replace those whose terms are due to expire on 15 April 1994

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. The Secretary-General, in compliance with article 17, paragraph 3, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, invited the States parties to the Convention to submit their nominations, by 10 November 1993, for the election of 12 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The 19 nominations that were received by that date were published in document CEDAW/SP/1994/3. One additional nomination was published in document CEDAW/SP/1994/3/Add.1, another two nominations were published in document CEDAW/SP/1994/3/Add.2 and an additional four were published in document CEDAW/SP/1994/3/Add.3. The Secretary-General has now received one more nomination as follows:

Justice Desirée P. Bernard - Guyana

2. Biographical data concerning the above-mentioned candidate, as furnished by her Government, is annexed hereto.

* CEDAW/SP/1994/1.

Annex

Desirée Patricia Bernard

Date of birth: 2 March 1939

Nationality: Guyanese

Marital status: Single

Professional qualifications and experience

Bachelor of Laws Degree, University of London (LL.B) (Hons.)

Practised as a solicitor in the High Court of the Supreme Court of Guyana, 1964-1980

Admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in England in 1977

Appointed to act as a magistrate in juvenile and maintenance courts, 1970

Appointed first woman judge of the High Court of the Supreme Court of Guyana, 1 October 1980

Appointed Commissioner of Oaths and Notary Public, 1976

Appointed first woman judge of the Court of Appeal of Guyana, May 1992. At present the only woman holding such a position in the Caribbean

Membership in organizations and committees

A. National

Elected Treasurer of Business and Professional Women's Club of Guyana, 1966

Elected Charter President of the Georgetown Toastmistress Club, 1967, and served until 1972

Elected Secretary of the Guyana Law Society, 1968, and elected President of the Society, 1972

Elected to the Committee of the Georgetown Twining Association, 1970 to promote twining with the city of Ottawa, Canada

Founder member of Guyana Consumers' Association

Member of the Council of the University of Guyana since 1971

Founder member of the Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana

Appointed member of the Adoption Board of Guyana, 1972, and later served as Deputy Chairman for several years

Member of the Legal Practitioners' Committee of Guyana, which is responsible for discipline of legal practitioners, 1972-1979

Member of the Board of Directors of the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic

Member of Guyana Labour Code Commission, 1975-1980

Appointed member of the Income Tax Board of Review, 1976

First President of the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers; held this post for two years

Appointed Chairman of the Legislation Committee of the Guyana Commission for the International Year of the Child, 1979

Only female member of the Judicial Service Commission of Guyana since 1982

Elected President of the All-Guyana Netball Association, 1987

Member of the Board of Trustees of the Guyana Girl Guides Association

Appointed first woman Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of Guyana, and first in the Province of the West Indies

B. Regional

First Secretary of Caribbean Women's Association, 1970-1974; at present serving as a resource person

Member of the Caribbean Council of Legal Education, 1970-1980

Elected first and only female President of the Organisation of Commonwealth Caribbean Bar Associations, 1976; made Honorary Life Member, 1980

Served as member and Chairman of the Caribbean Steering Committee for Women's Affairs, 1978 (later established as the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies)

Member of the Caribbean Task Force on Abortion, 1978

C. International

Honorary member of the Canadian Bar Association, 1976-1978

Member and Country Vice-President of the International Federation of Women Lawyers

Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1982-1992; served as Rapporteur, 1982-1984 and as chairperson, 1985-1989

Member of the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association

Member of the International Association of Women Judges

Outstanding achievements

Gave voluntary service to the Guyana Legal Aid Centre, 1975-1980

Was appointed Chairman of a Committee established by the President of Guyana in 1981 to examine all laws with a view to abolishing discrimination against women and against children born out of wedlock. As a result of recommendations, several discriminatory laws against women were abolished and the Bastardy Act repealed. A new Act was passed granting children born out of wedlock equal status with children born in wedlock. The Equal Rights Act was passed, as well as the Act giving some proprietary rights to women living in common law relationships

Has written several articles and delivered papers and lectures on the legal rights of women and children

Attended Ninth Commonwealth Law Conference in Auckland, New Zealand and presented a keynote paper on violence and the family as well as a paper on the domestic application of international human rights norms as it affects women

In 1991, presented paper on the effect of the common law on Caribbean jurisprudence in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, to celebrate twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Caribbean Council of Legal Education

Awards

Awarded the Cacique Crown of Honour, the third highest national award of Guyana, for outstanding service in the improvement of the status of women

Received award from the Women's Unit of the University of Guyana for outstanding contribution in the field of law

Awarded medal of service from the Caribbean Women's Association

Received award from the University of the West Indies Guild of Graduates, New York chapter, in November 1992 for commitment to the rights of women and children and dedication to scholarship and Caribbean jurisprudence

Other information

Attended Conference of Women Lawyers of the Caribbean and Latin America held in Airlie, Virginia, United States of America, 1975

Attended International Women's Year Conference, Mexico, 1975

Attended Fifth Commonwealth Law Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, as President of the Organization of Commonwealth Caribbean Bar Associations, 1977

Attended annual conference of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States of America, 1979

Attended mid-Decade Women's Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1980, as a resource person for the non-governmental forum

Attended end-of-Decade World Conference for Women, Nairobi, Kenya, to present the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as its contribution to the World Conference

Visited Japan in 1988 as Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and met with women's groups and members of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Women's Affairs

Visited China at the invitation of the All China Women's Federation

Resource person of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat and, as such, attended the regional seminar held in Antigua in April 1992 to sensitize government officials responsible for women's affairs about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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